



February 19, 2004

The Honorable Chaka Fattah  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Fattah:

On behalf of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF), I would like to thank you for introducing the Student Bill of Rights (HR 236) legislation. NCTAF believes that every child deserves a quality education delivered by competent, caring, qualified teachers in schools organized for success.

As the fiftieth anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education* approaches, the nation is still struggling to close the teaching quality gap for low-income students and students of color. The belief is that we can't find enough teachers to do the job. The truth is that we can't keep them. Frustrated by inadequate school conditions, thousands of teachers stop teaching every year, and each year thousands more leave their classrooms seeking better teaching conditions in other schools.

High teacher turnover rates undermine the continuity, coherence, and community that are so essential to good schools. To close the student achievement gap, we must close the teaching quality gap, and to do that we must retain good teachers by ensuring that conditions in every school meet high standards for teaching and learning.

NCTAF is committed to working toward these objectives and we thank you for putting this issue front and center on the national agenda with this legislation.

Sincerely,

Thomas G. Carroll, Ph.D.  
President